

PEOPLE HEAR MANY SPEAKERS.

COMMISSION FORM OF GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD.

Messrs. Jennings, Clifton, Epps, Boyle, Belser, McLaurin, Manning and Moise Make Speeches for and Against the Proposed Form of City Government—Jennings Will Not Be Candidate for Mayor Again.

The second of the meetings to discuss the commission form of government was held at the court house Friday night. As an oratorical contest the meeting was decidedly a success, but as an attempt to enlighten the voters of Sumter on the workings of the commission form of government and tell them what it was and what it stood for, the meeting was a failure as was the first meeting.

While all, except a few, seemed agreed that the meeting was not to discuss the law, but to decide which form of government was best for Sumter, there were very few of the speakers who stuck to this side of the question. The law with its real, or imaginary, defects, as pointed out by Mr. Epps at the last meeting, was the topic most generally under discussion. The people seemed to want to learn more about the commission form of government and not disputes concerning technical points of law, and to a great extent they were disappointed.

The most enlightening article was the letter from Mayor Gibbs of Columbia, which was read by Dr. Baker at the opening of the session. This letter stated in clear cut phrases that the savings under the new form of government during the first seven months of its existence was approximately \$10,000. Mayor Gibbs stated in his letter that the amount was saved because the commission form of government had spent judiciously and with system, while under the old government the city's money had been spent without system. It was the system and not the men under the old form of government which had been responsible for the waste of funds.

Dr. Baker stated in opening the meeting that at the former meeting discussion had been on theoretical points, but this time they had endeavored to secure Mayor Gibbs or some other member of the commission in Columbia to come over and tell the people about the workings of the commission form of government, but unsuccessfully, as all of these gentlemen had previous engagements. He then read Mayor Gibbs letter which was heard with interest. It was decided to limit the time of each speaker to fifteen minutes, to be extended at the will of the house. Each of the first four speakers had this time extended to more than twice the original limit.

Mr. Jennings was the first speaker. He stated that he would try to show that the act was all right and that the serious and disastrous defects pointed out by Mr. Epps at the last meeting were mere "bug-a-boos." He said that some people stated that he was urging the commission form of government from selfish motives, as he wanted to be Mayor under the new system. He had also heard some say that Mr. Boyle was opposing the commission form of government from selfish motives, as he wanted to be mayor again under the old system. He would not under any circumstances or conditions, or for any consideration, again be a candidate for mayor. He wanted that made plain at the start. He could not say about Mr. Boyle. He was in favor of the new form of government because he realized that the present council had been unable to administer the affairs of the city in a businesslike way and he thought that there would be an introduction of a business system with the adoption of the commission form of government. He then went on into an explanation of the law.

"There is not one member of the Sumter bar, so far as I can learn, who agreed with Mr. Epps on his interpretation of the law governing elections," said Mr. Jennings. It was the whole bar against one lawyer, which was apt to be correct? He pointed out that the section referred to by Mr. Epps simply governed the election on the adoption of the commission form of government and nothing further. He stated that the recall, initiative and referendum were not put in the bill to be used often, it would probably be many years, if ever before they were ever brought into use. In the meantime the legislature could correct any minor defects in the bill.

"Not one permanent improvement which has ever been put in under the present system of city government has ever been paid for when it was put in," he said. He could not see a better reason for adopting the proposed form of government. The benefit or harm of the new form of government could not be seen until it was adopted and tried, as it was all theoretical now. He was in favor of trying something new which offered great advantages, and then, if it proved

ed unsuccessful, the city could return to the old form of government after six years, or before then by special enactment of the legislature, if it was thought necessary and best to do so.

There was some discussion as to who would make the next speech. It being finally decided to have Mr. Clifton speak, although he was to answer the arguments offered by Mr. Epps concerning defects in the act without having heard these arguments, except through conversation on the streets.

Mr. Clifton stated that there might be some minor defects, but that there was certainly nothing direful or disastrous for the people of Sumter in the act, as Mr. Epps would have them believe. These defects could be corrected, however, if they were in the bill at any time, as a great part of the work the legislature was in passing bills remedying defects. He stated that the Sumter people were in a quandary as to how to get their bill through, as the governor had stated he would veto any commission form bill which was passed and had already vetoed several. It was finally decided to attach the special amendment referring to Sumter to the general bill which was up before the General Assembly. This simply gave the people the right to vote on the form of government they wanted, the new or the old system, and, in case the new system was chosen, whether they wanted a manager or not. The section referring to elections was intended simply to refer to elections on the adoption of the commission form of government. He then stated that the law itself made it mandatory for its interpretation according to its intention and not according to its wording. He did not see any real need of the initiative, recall and referendum, as they would probably never be used. The people wanted something done, despite technical objections, and this new form of government offered a change which might result in great good, but, if it did not, it might be changed back to the old form at the end of six years.

Mr. Clifton stated that he thought that all would agree with him when he stated that they all wanted to do what was best for the city. In speaking of the benefit which Columbia had derived from the commission form of government, Mr. Huger stated that Columbia had a source of revenue which Sumter did not have, to which Mr. Clifton retorted that if Sumter's income was small and the mayor and council could not spend the funds judiciously, how much more did they need the commission form of government so that funds would be spent judiciously. Sumter had done well in the past under the old system, but how much better it would do in the future with the commission form of government.

He thought the departmental system best, as he thought it best to have a head for each department of the city government. He thought that Sumter had good men who could fill the positions efficiently and well. He did not believe that there was any defect in the act which should prevent any person from voting for its adoption at the election next Tuesday.

Mr. Epps stated that he had come to the first meeting for the purpose of learning, with the best interest of the city at heart. This new form of government proposed was a combination of the Galveston, Des Moines and manager system which "they" were trying to cram down the throats of the people. He maintained what he had said previously about the defects in the law concerning the ordering of elections, and other points. He pointed out that the council "might do this and it might do that," there was too much freedom of action. It might appoint an attorney after an election to investigate and convict the councilmen of fraud, but would an attorney appointed by them seek to convict of fraud those who had appointed him to office? He understood that the act had been drawn up in two hours and he did not believe in overthrowing the government of a hundred years with the work of a few men during that brief time. He was opposed to the manager system, as a man could not be found who could do all the things that would be required of him and, besides, probably, a man from outside would be obtained who would try to revolutionize the affairs of the city without first learning the traditions of the city. He did not see how a system which began with the increase of the expenses of the city 8 per cent could be cheaper for the city.

He pointed out that the man receiving the highest number of votes might run over with the man receiving the lowest number of votes, referring to the section of the act that required the mayor and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes to run over in case the recall was used at any time.

Mr. Boyle thought that Mr. Jennings had contradicted himself. He, Mr. Jennings, had first stated that they needed specialists to run the city and had then stated that they wanted

a city manager—a business man—to look after the affairs of the whole city. He did not believe such a man could be obtained. He thought that the departmental system was the less harmful of the two forms of commission government. He did not believe the people would adopt an act with the flaws in it which Mr. Epps had pointed out. He did not believe that the people could get changes made in the act by the legislature. He did not think that a manager, or that three men were able to run the town. He did not think that the city was able to pay sufficient salaries for these officers to expend all of their time on the city's affairs. He was in favor of continuing the old form of government and paying the chairmen of the principal committees a sufficient remuneration for their time.

Mr. Belser did not have any criticism to offer the old form of government, but he was in favor of the proposed form. He was in favor of the officials being paid for their services, as he believed that they would give better services if they were remunerated. He thought the city able to pay for the proper discharge of its duties. He was in favor of the departmental system, as opposed to the manager system.

He stated that all parts of the bill were the same as the bill for Columbia which had existed in force for more than two years, without any of the defects pointed out by Mr. Epps, proving it to be disastrous. The officers should keep regular office hours and meet constantly to direct the affairs of the city and correct defects which crept in. The statute had been drafted by twenty-one of the best lawyers in the State, those on the Judiciary Committee, and he did not think that this able body of men would pass an act which would not stand legally.

Mr. H. D. Moise thought that as no other lawyer of the Sumter bar agreed with Mr. Epps on his points of law of the act, that it was a good sign that the bill was "O. K." He thought it should be put before the people on the grounds of whether or no it was the best thing for the city and not as to whether or not it was technically perfect, however. The present council was anxious to pass over to the new form of city government, there must be something in this and it was a good reason for changing. He did not think that there would be any difficulty in changing back to the old form, as other cities had adopted the departmental form of city government and had reaped benefits, why would Sumter not do likewise? He had come up to the meeting before without any preference as to the forms of government, but he now, after a careful and thorough consideration, had decided that this new form was the best and he hoped the people of Sumter would consider the matter carefully and earnestly and adopt this proposed form of government next Tuesday, as it had proved more progressive and the cities under it had been shown to be more prosperous than other cities.

Mr. McLaurin said that the affairs of the city were now in a serious condition and in the near future situations would have to be faced which the present form of city government could not deal with. The time was coming when a business man, a man of proved efficiency and ability, must be placed in charge of the affairs of the city, a man who would give his whole time and energy to the affairs of the city. He was in favor of a general manager. He believed that a man could be obtained to fill the position at a suitable salary—a man who could deal with all problems to the best advantage for the city. He was anxious to get away from the present system with its slipshod, unsystematic methods and adopt some newer and better form of city government. "Get commission government and then decide on which form was best for the whole city, at any rate," he said.

Mr. J. A. Warren stated, at this point, that the people had come to hear about the commission form of government and not about technicalities of the law. The minds of the people were confused and he thought it best to let the matter rest until a law which the ordinary layman could understand was passed.

Mr. R. L. Manning stated that in the senate the procedure had always been to have the lawyers on the committee explain the law first, but generally there were so many differences in opinion that the laymen on the committee could not understand the law when it was explained. He was in favor of settling the form of city government now, the time ought not be delayed. He thought that the city needed a change and then, after a change had been made, he thought it would be time to decide which of the two systems was best. The meetings of council now were too far apart, someone should be in active charge of the affairs of the city at all times. The present trouble was in the system and not in the men, as Mr. Gibbs had stated. He thought the city should pay for what it got and he

thought efficient men could be found to be placed at the head of the city government under the new system. He thought it very desirable to have a change from the present system as the present one could not go on without serious disaster to the city. Business methods should be applied and even if the new form of government was an experiment, the experiment should be made. "We should not be bound down by tradition," he said. "Efficiency and ability" are needed and efficiency has not been obtained under the present form of city government. He advised the people to vote for a commission form of government under the departmental system, and then, afterwards, the business manager could be obtained, if he was needed.

THOUGHT WOMAN MYRTLE HAWKINS.

Spartanburg Man Had Officer to Come From Hendersonville to Identify Woman.

It was learned Thursday that Wednesday night two men, whose names could not be ascertained, one supposed to be from Hendersonville and one from Spartanburg, tried to secure a warrant from Magistrate Wells for the arrest of a woman staying in a house in the southern part of the city whom they claimed was Myrtle Hawkins, the woman who was supposed by many to have died under very peculiar conditions in Hendersonville, N. C., last summer and for whose murder a number of persons are now on trial at that place in the circuit court.

However, the men, it was learned, found their search fruitless, for the woman who was taken to be Myrtle Hawkins was found to be another woman. It was reported Thursday that the mistake was due to the fact that the two women did look something alike and the further fact that the man who made the mistake was not familiar with the real Myrtle Hawkins, but had only seen her two or three times.

The particulars of the matter as reported are that a traveling man from Spartanburg arrived here Saturday night and seeing the woman mistook her for the Hawkins woman. He spoke to her and his opinion was strengthened. He then immediately wrote on to Hendersonville for someone who knew Myrtle Hawkins. The officer who came to identify the woman here was not Myrtle Hawkins.

COMMISSION TO EXAMINE HYDE.

Governor Takes Case Under Consideration.

Columbia, June 7.—Leon A. Rice, attorney of Anderson, yesterday requested the governor to appoint a commission, to be headed by Dr. J. W. Babcock, to examine Samuel N. Hyde and make report as to his sanity. Hyde was convicted in Anderson county on the charge of killing his wife, and was sentenced to death in the electric chair on July 5. Mr. Rice was appointed by the court to defend Hyde. Executive clemency was refused Hyde several weeks ago, and the governor said yesterday that he would take the request for the commission under consideration. Mr. Rice also asked the governor yesterday to commute the sentence of Hyde to life imprisonment.

While nothing of an official nature has been announced it is expected that a respite will have to be granted by the governor to several prisoners in the State who are under sentence of death, as the electric chair at the penitentiary will not be completed until about the middle of July. The work on the construction of the building for the chair has been begun and will be rushed to completion as soon as possible. The contract for the apparatus has been awarded and it will be installed when the building has been completed.

Campaign Lie Says Belser.

Columbia, June 11.—"It's only a campaign lie; there's not a word of truth in it. I am in the governor's race to the finish." This was Governor Belser's statement today when asked about the story that has been going the rounds to the effect that he would likely withdraw from the governor's race and enter the race for the United States Senate against Benjamin R. Tillman. The story was first heard of three or four weeks ago and had recently gained great currency. The governor returned yesterday from a speaking trip to Greenwood and Ninety Six. "My trip," he said, "was most encouraging. I spoke at Greenwood to about 3,000 people. I was surprised at the size of the crowd. I spoke at Ninety Six at night to about 500. I have great hopes now of carrying Greenwood county, which has always been against me."

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Write for: Ladies' Advisory Dept., Chattanooga Medicine Co., Chattanooga, Tenn., for Special Instructions, and 64-page book, "Home Treatment for Women," sent free. J 54

SUMTER GOING FORWARD.

That Sumter is making substantial progress is abundantly evidenced by the following facts:

- (1) The Seaboard Air Line is being graded to within one mile of city.
- (2) The pipes of the new Gas plant are being laid throughout the city.
- (3) Two new Bank and Office buildings are being constructed.
- (4) New Hotel of one hundred rooms being erected.
- (5) Six new Stores going up on Main street.
- (6) Handsome new buildings being erected by Methodist and Jewish congregations.
- (7) Several handsome Brick Residences being erected, in addition to a number of smaller dwellings throughout the city.

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For the above occasion Southern Railway has authorized very low round trip excursion rates from all points in South Carolina, tickets on sale June 9th, 10th and 11th, with final limit returning June 15th.

A Special Pullman Car will leave Charleston, S. C.—Train No. 11 at 5:15 P. M. leaves Columbia, S. C. 11:50 P. M. June 10th, arriving Asheville, N. C. 7:00 A. M. June 11th, for accommodation of Shriner and their friends.

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